



# The South India CHURCHMAN



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# Towards A Just and Sustainable Society



A widely representative body of the world Christian Community will gather in a conference to be held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, U.S.A., from 12th to 24th July, 1979. This World Conference on 'Faith, Science and the Future' is sponsored by the World Council of Churches. It will be attended by leading scientists, technologists, theologians and scholars of other disciplines who will be concerned with vital issues of science and faith affecting the very future of mankind and human civilization.

The significance and relevance of this International Conference can hardly be exaggerated at a time when the indiscriminate use of science and technology with emphasis on quantitative economic growth at the cost of the quality of human life is tending to upset the ecological balance between man and his environment. This creeping ecological imbalance is fraught with such horrible consequences that people all over the world are asking anxiously: Whither Humanity?

This is not the first time when the survival of man is threatened by the loss of balance between him and his environment. The migration of human groups from place to place in search of new lands and fresh pastures together with the rise and fall of human civilizations in different centres testifies to the fact that whenever a group of people thoughtlessly indulged in the despoliation of nature and desecration of their environment they were faced with famine, pestilence, draught, deforestation, parched meadows and other calamities which forced them to abandon their habitation and migrate to some other place. The post-modern man today armed with the double-edged weapons of science and technology and possessed by the demon of greedy consumism is exploiting nature so ruthlessly that the earth's resources—land, fuel and other sources of energy, minerals, water, etc.—are getting depleted rapidly. The crisis is further aggravated by the environmental pollution caused by the giant industrial plants and nuclear explorations. To cap it all there is the problem of ever increasing population with no new sources of food, energy and living space. In such a situation it is feared that the earth may soon become unfit for human habitation.

Unfortunately the post-modern man, unlike his forefathers, has no other place on this globe to migrate

and start life and civilization afresh. Therefore it is imperative that the present generation who have a responsibility for the future should come to grips with the problem of establishing an ecological system which is capable of sustaining the human community in future. It is to be ardently hoped that the World Conference on Faith, Science and the Future will shed some light on the search for a sustainable society.

A sustainable society requires serious re-thinking about the role of science and technology in human development. The question to be asked is: What kind of technology is appropriate to promote development without undermining the values of human dignity, freedom and equality? It is also necessary to realise that a society where there is no justice cannot be a sustainable society. Justice within the nation and between the nations is absolutely necessary for a sustainable society. This would necessitate the re-distribution of nature's resources and wealth at the national as well as global levels. In short the search for a sustainable society must be a quest for a new international socio-economic order and cultural values.

The Chief cause of the present uncertainty about the future of man is the loss of balance between man and nature. So, in order to ensure the future of man and sustain human society in future, it is necessary to restore proper relationship between man and nature. Is man the master of nature? Or is he the child of nature? Until recently Christian theology has fostered the idea that man has dominion over the earth and is expected to exploit the resources of the earth for the benefit of mankind. This understanding of man's relationship with nature was in a way responsible for leading him to despoil the nature and pollute the environment which rob the earth and environment of their sustaining power and resources. A correct understanding of the relationship between man and nature is a signpost on the path to a just and sustainable society. Man must act in conformity with certain natural laws if he is to get the best out of his environment. As Shoemaker says: 'When man tries to circumvent the laws of nature, he usually destroys the natural environment that sustains him. And when his environment deteriorates, his civilization declines'.



# Freedom for What?

## (Reflections on the Freedom of Religion Bill)

BY

CHANDRAN DEVANESEN

A preacher who was asked what he thought of sin promptly replied, 'I am against it'! And I am against this controversial bill because it commits the sin of verbal dishonesty by talking about the 'freedom of religion' when its real intention is to 'regulate' or to 'control' religion. It is also dishonest because it says nothing about the powerful inducements that are now offered to 'reconvert' people. A Christian of Harijan origin, for example, is not considered backward today but if he 'reconverts' tomorrow he immediately becomes eligible for various concessions including scholarships. If this isn't 'inducement' or 'allurement' what is it?

I can, therefore, understand the opposition the bill has aroused especially from us Christians and the Christian Churches in India though members of other minorities are also slowly realizing its full implications as an anti-human rights measure.

But I am also apprehensive that all the justifiable militancy the bill has aroused may make for a rather self-righteous attitude at a time when the bill should also challenge us to do some painful self-examination and introspection regarding the role of the Church and the Christian community in India today. I would like to raise some probing questions not in any mood of accusation or condemnation, but in penitence and sorrow as one who is himself involved in some of these unhappy problems. If I am wrong I am willing to be corrected but let me plead for some serious reflection concerning these issues.

1. It is good that many thoughtful Christians have realized that the opposition to the bill should be in the nature of a protest against an undemocratic measure which violates the human rights not only of the members of all minorities but of all citizens of India. But are we sure that this is the true ground of our fight against the bill? Are we sure that we are free from all communal bias ourselves? Are there not among us some who talk and act as if the only way to fight Communalism is to promote an unconscious or conscious brand of Christian Communalism? If we do so are we not ourselves betraying the secular ideal on which our Constitution and Government is founded? We will be helping our Hindu friends, the minorities

and all the people of our country by resisting the temptation to become communal ourselves and to stand with firmness and integrity for a truly secular, democratic Republic in which the human rights of all are guaranteed without any discrimination.

2. Being a historian I would also like to make sure that our espousal of religious freedom, because we feel threatened at the moment, is not just a bit of historical and political expediency but a human right we would strongly uphold even where Christians are in a majority. Religious freedom has had different connotations in different historical and political situations. Let us not forget that Christians have fought Christians or sought asylum or exile in the name of religious freedom in order to get away from persecuting Christians in power! Have we truly learned the lessons of the past so that our concept of freedom is rooted and grounded in Christ who died to make all men free, Christ 'whose service is perfect freedom'—a freedom which has to be maintained on earth and within history? We need to ponder deeply over what we mean by 'religious freedom' as Christians and how it applies to all men everywhere.
3. I find the fear of those who are afraid of 'conversions' rather ironical at any rate as far as the Christians are concerned. How many Christians are genuinely concerned, about conversion or involve themselves in evangelistic activities? If we analyse the spending of our ecclesiastical and religious organizations how much of it is really set apart for evangelism as compared to the amounts needed to maintain the various structures and institutions of the Church? The amount of exhortation and sermonizing that goes on seems to be in inverse proportion to the actual amount of evangelistic work that is undertaken especially by the laity. For more energy seems to be expended on church elections than on evangelism!
4. Though it is painful to even state it, are there not certain sociological factors within some churches which result in vested interests which in turn account for a lack of enthusiasm for evangelism? Is there not some truth in the statement that some churches have become the preserve of a particular caste or linguistic group or ethnic tribe and would not really welcome 'converts' from other 'out-groups' which do not belong to that 'in-group'? Have there not been a few cases of converts who have been unhappy or who 'reconverted' because of their non-acceptance by the dominant group? While all this is understandable in objective sociological terms what have we done to see that such situations are redeemed in the Christian sense by becoming a true fellowship of believers?
5. If we are insistent on the right to convert as an essential aspect of our faith have we stopped to ask, 'Convert to what?' Are we not in danger of a purely 'other-worldly' approach if we think of conversion in abstract terms with no relevance the historical and sociological context? Why 'convert' people who practice caste distinctions outside the Church so that they can practise them within the Church? How can a man understand that 'conversion' means becoming a 'new man', 'a new creature' in Christ if he finds himself trapped in the same old social order? In what sense is he joining the community of the redeemed,



the fellowship of all believers, if he finds the churches and their institutions marred by 'in-fighting' based on caste or language?

6. Some of the correspondence which has appeared in the Press regarding the bill reveals a sad amount of misinformation about 'foreign funds' and the uses to which they are put. To keep silent about it may only heighten these unfounded suspicions that money received from overseas is being used to win converts in the way in which politicians use money to win votes! While it is difficult to answer this unfair charge since almost anything and everything that is done by Christians in any sphere of activity could be labelled as 'inducements' we should patiently try to explain and communicate the actual uses to which gifts from overseas are put. We should also prove that the Church is extremely careful not to use money or any other form of wrong incentives to make converts. After all, of what value will such converts be to either the Church or the community if they enter the fold from wrong motives? It is obviously in the interests of the Church and the community to make absolutely sure of the bonafides of intending converts to the faith since far deeper things are involved than mere statistics or the counting of heads.

Since the Church is a world-wide and universal body we cannot deny the importance of our fellowship and partnership with Christians everywhere which is basic to our faith. We welcome their gifts as an act of sharing and love when they are received in the right spirit. These gifts are not to be used selfishly but on behalf of all who suffer and to meet human need. And we have to be good and honest stewards of what we receive.

I do not think the charge that money is being used to make converts can be substantiated. But there is a concern which has to be expressed about the wrong use of money in church politics. It is not the existence of Church politics which is wrong since politics cannot be avoided or excluded from any institution, sacred or secular. What is wrong is when money is involved in various forms of patronage to maintain individuals and groups in power in their churches. It is also regrettable that in some instances the availability of such resources keeps alive certain forms of denominationalism which militates against the spirit of ecumenism. Therefore, it is the wrong use of church funds and overseas gifts within some of the churches themselves that constitutes a problem rather than the alleged use of such aid to make converts which has not been proved and would definitely be condemned if any such instances came to light.

7. An aspect of the controversy over the bill which needs discussion is how to define who or what is 'a foreign missionary' in today's world. The great religions of the world are no longer confined within certain clearly demarcated geographical boundaries and there are all sorts of 'foreign missionaries' in what is becoming a two-way traffic with 'Hare Krishna!' now as familiar as 'Hallelujah!' Therefore, there is need for a more tolerant attitude unless we are strictly atheistic or anti-rational and prepared to ban all 'missionaries'—the 'missionaries' of secular ideologies like Marxism by no means being excluded!

Rather than embrace such an obscurantist outlook we should appreciate Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's view when he wrote, 'We should not wish any religion to compromise or capitulate. We should treat all religions as friendly partners in the supreme task of nourishing the spiritual life of mankind. When they begin to fertilize one another, they will supply the soul which this world is seeking'.<sup>1</sup> We Indian Christians are fond of talking about the need for 'dialogue' with members of other faiths as if we are dealing with strangers and not with our neighbours or even with our own kith and kin. If we search our hearts do we not find that we can be prejudiced or even intolerant? In dealing with our neighbours and fellowmen and women of other faiths we should learn from Jesus Christ himself to appreciate them since he often marvelled at the faith of non-Jews. 'I have not found such faith, no not in Israel!' Paying a tribute to his Hindu family doctor D. T. Niles wrote, 'Speaking quite deliberately, I would say that one of the best examples I know of the fruit of the Spirit, as Paul has defined it, is this doctor friend of mine. I am quite aware that we have a tendency to look at our fellow Christians under a microscope, whereas we look at other good men through a telescope. And yet I am prepared to stand by my statement'.<sup>2</sup>

But to return to the problem of 'missionaries', it is difficult to know whom the critics are talking about sometimes. 'Christian missionaries', for example, have been blamed for the rout of the Janata Party in the recent elections in Mizoram alleging that they made good use of the Freedom of Religion Bill for this purpose. Apart from the fact that no Christian missionary, foreign or Indian, can enter Mizoram due to the present strict Regulations, do the Mizos, who are 100% Christian, need any kind of 'missionary' to make them object to the bill? In politics it is always easy to find scape goats!

The Church should take more pains to clarify why it still needs co-workers from overseas. The principle of faith which is involved concerns the very nature of the Church which must witness to its universality—something which ought to be better understood now that other great religions are going out into the world and are often quite proud of their Western 'converts'. The presence of overseas missionaries in the Churches is necessary to remind us of our commitment to world-wide brotherhood under God. If churches are making any other use of overseas missionaries then they should rethink their role and make clear the humanitarian and service aspects of their presence and their non-involvement in anything that smacks off power politics or harmful proselytization. It is unfortunate that the small and dwindling band of dedicated overseas missionaries should be the target of so much ill-informed attack but what have we Indian Christians done to remove the misconceptions about them?

8. We should also ponder deeply over the question as to whether we are not exposed to criticisms (even if unfairly) because of the highly organized and institutionalized nature of the Church with

<sup>1</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Culture* Orient Paperback, 1968, pp. 20-21.

<sup>2</sup> D. T. Niles, *Who is this Jesus?* Lutterworth Press 1968, pp. 16-17.



its hierarchical and bureaucratic structures which other less organized religious bodies are able to avoid since their activities are less visible.

To quote D. T. Niles again, 'The Hindu Community has no religious organization, nor has the Buddhist. They have religious institutions, but there is no organization that dispenses patronage and in which careerism is both a temptation and a necessity. The very nature of the Church's task in the world has made the Church a socio-religious organization. To have such an organization linked theologically to Jesus Christ produces a number of problems which are well-nigh insoluble'.<sup>3</sup> But difficult though it may be it is still incumbent upon us to prove that the activities of the Christian Church and community are not inimical to but deeply concerned with the true interests and welfare of the nation. A decade ago, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, while addressing a conference of Christian Social Workers in Ranchi, referred to the criticism of Christian welfare activities and said, 'It will take a lot of Christian love and patience to find a solution to this hostility'.<sup>4</sup> The bill has quite

understandably aroused opposition and protest. But let us not forget the need for Christian love and patience in dealing with those who have sponsored the bill and those who support it.

To conclude, in these days it is fashionable to talk about 'conscientization' and 'liberation' sometimes in parrot fashion. But have we done enough to conscientize and liberate our own congregations and Church members? Have we really done enough to fight the social evils in our midst to prove that the Christian way of life involves us in a struggle to establish 'a new social order' (the title of one of Dr. Eddy Asirvatham's books!) based on freedom, justice, human rights and love? We are always ready to advocate change for abstractions like 'the people', 'the masses', 'marginal men' etc., but how committed are we ourselves to change? As Gustavo Gutierrez put it, 'As a sign of the liberation of man and history, the Church itself in its concrete existence ought to be a place of liberation'.<sup>5</sup> If the Freedom of Religion Bill challenges us to look inwards so that we set about putting our own houses in order then, perhaps, we shall have gained the moral and spiritual strength we need to fight for religious freedom in the name of justice, human rights and love, as they concern all men, everywhere.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup> F. Ivern, *Chotanagpur Survey* Indian Social Institute, 1969 p. 433.

<sup>5</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez. *A Theology of Liberation*, SCM 1974, p. 261.

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## *The Joint Council of the CNI-CSI-Mar Thoma*

The Second meeting of the Executive Committee of the Joint Council of the CNI-CSI-Mar Thoma Churches, which had been formed in July 1978, was held at the Mar Thoma Children's Centre, Charal Mount, Kerala, on 5th May, 1979. The Committee met there at the invitation of the most Rev. Alexander Mar Thoma as guests of the Mar Thoma Church.

The meeting was jointly chaired by the Most Rev. Alexander Mar Thoma, a President of the Joint Council, the Rt. Rev. Solomon Doraisawmy, the Deputy Moderator of the CSI and the Rt. Rev. D. C. Gorai, Bishop of Barrackpore of the CNI.

The whole of the forenoon of the one-day meeting was devoted to the question of the name of the One Church in which the three Churches belong together. This was the one issue on which no agreement had been reached before the formation of the joint Council even though the objective of the three churches when they formed the Joint Theological Commission was the visible manifestation of the oneness of the three churches. The Joint Council referred the matter of the name of the One Church to the Executive Committee for further study. One view which had been expressed was that the constitution of the Mar Thoma Church prohibited any change of its name and therefore the Church could not unite

with other Churches to become part of a Church bearing another name. It was therefore decided that the members of the Executive Committee study the constitutions of all the three churches. At the Charal Mount meeting it was noted that article 388 of the Mar Thoma Church's constitution prohibited any amendment to Part I Chapter I of the constitution which has the heading *Declarations*. The first clause of the declarations reads: 'The Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church, believed to have been founded by Saint Thomas, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World, and known by that name is part of the ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, and APOSTOLIC Church.' The whole question of whether the three Churches can together adopt a common name depends on how the Mar Thoma Church interprets this clause. The clause explicitly acknowledges that the Mar Thoma Church is *part* of the church Universal. The question is whether in view of this the Mar Thoma Church can also decide to become part of a larger expression or part of the Church Universal. The question is whether in view of this the Mar Thoma Church can also decide to become part of a larger expression or part of the Church Universal. The discussion raised a number of related issues including the meaning of conciliar unity, organic unity etc. It

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[JULY 1979]



# Image of God— The Indian Christian

God made us in the image of God. As it is said poetically that God created a flower, but 'forget' to put a soul into it so also it appears that God created us all, but the Christians in India are yet to project the image of an 'Indian' throughout this unfortunate country! Inside our own Motherland, Christians in India are treated as aliens to their religion, culture and ways of living. The Indian Christian by and large has set up a standard, not quite acceptable by our own countrymen! We form only 2½% of India's total population. The learning process expected of us has been more than unsatisfactory. We are yet to prove to the world that we are the salt of the earth. In some portions of our country, we may appear as mustard seeds in numerical strength, but in many parts of India we are indeed as scarce as figs. In fact we are cursed as trees, that do not bear fruit.

And now because of the little best we have been doing in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forbidden from extending our wholesome influence by way of Christian propaganda. We are looked down upon as II class citizens. At the same time, we are looked up on with envy and jealousy for our triumphs in other directions.

It is true we have been pioneers in many directions as in Education and Medical help. But the results accruing from these and many other avenues do not convince India of our indispensability or need for further assistance in spheres, where we have already outshone other Communities in our own country.

The reasons for this attitude are very many. What is the actual 'image' we present to our countrymen in all parts of India? Are we considered essentially as mature citizens capable of contributing our inherent and traditional goods—spiritual, moral and educational—to meet India's needs at many levels? **THIS IS WHERE THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEMS LIES.**

The image of the Indian Christian is not considered adequate enough to reflect an Ideal citizen of India.

We are notorious for our partiality towards liquor. We do not take a legitimate part to uphold Prohibition in any state. In working towards removing untouchability, we lag behind, as we have enough of the caste-venom in our blood. Prejudices and superstitions allied to caste and communal differences are in plentiful supply in our personal and social make-up. Inter-Caste marriages are yet to be contracted on a mass scale within the four walls of Christian Temple of worship. We are still clamouring for Political privileges as Backward Classes and Special concessions for Scheduled Class and Scheduled Tribes' Christians. Our beliefs and stand for the 'Minorities' are disgustingly made manifest on many fronts. **WE SEEM TO REVEL AS MEMBERS OF A MINORITY COMMUNITY.** DO we love our neighbours as our own in the slums of Madras? Our Dowry system is yet to be removed in certain sections of the community. Even inside churches we manifest our differences, bitter and long enduring, in matters of worship. Our languages differ. Church music is completely un-Indian in a majority of cases. Our forms of worship differ considerably from those of our countrymen. Indegenous expressions are still kept as taboos in spite of all the labours of a few for the renewal and revival of Indian Christians on the religious plane. Our Bishops, Priests and Nuns are yet to be accepted as full-fledged Indians for various reasons. Our Seminaries by and large train youth on Imported Theology. Their style of living is not similar, by any Standard to what the disciples of a guru manifest in an Indian Ashram.

About our average food items and drinks, the least said is better. Are we in any sense advocate for vegetarianism? About our addiction to 'English' none need exaggerate. The image of a convent school is to give 'Modern' Education, totally alien to Indian students. Our craze for Western music is notoriously known. Do our clergy forsake tobacco even to a limited extent? The Christian ladies are declared to set the pace for the use of costly cosmetics. Even in our hospitals and dispensaries we stand more for Allopathy and not in the least interested in or practise other systems of Indian medicine, as Siddha, Unani and Ayurvedic. In our clothing, we have an eagerness to imitate the Western Standards, and show the least desire to put on Khadar or Swedeshi goods.

In what sense could an Indian Christian ever say or maintain that he is more 'Indian' than others in our own motherland? We retain un-Indian titles even in the Hierarchical circles as Bishops, Arch-Bishops, Cardinals etc.

All these completely set aside any deserving consideration of Christians in India as worthy citizens of our own motherland. It is not surprising the Niyogi's Report of 1950s should now be followed by a Tyagi Bill.

Ignatius Absalom



# Women Trainees in Theology

Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute had the privilege of bringing together sixty theologically trained Indian women from all over India representing various denominations for a Conference from 20th to 22nd February, 1979. There were fifty delegates and ten observers. The Conference was held at Gurukul, Madras with the theme 'Theologically Trained Woman in India—Dare, Share and Act'. Rev. Dr. G. Thomas Edward, Executive Secretary of the UELCI during the Opening Devotion expressed that all the decisions and discussions should be based on the Word of God.

The Keynote address was given by Dr. Russel Chandran, Principal of United Theological College, Bangalore. He placed before the participants a few questions such as—What is that which unites you and has brought you together as a group here? What do you mean by theology? What is the difference between theologically trained persons and others? All these questions stimulated the thinking of the participants. During his lecture he stressed that we should understand the context in which the Word of God was written. The doctrinal formulations were framed to deal with particular historical situations and they were never intended to be the doctrine of all times, for all type of people throughout the world. He said, 'Theologically trained people have a special responsibility. Theology is not simply for our intellectual pleasure. Theology is for the renewal of the church. Theology is for the deepening of the faith, commitment and practice for all the believing community. Theology is to be shared. Every Christian should become a theologian. You have the responsibility of making every believer a theologian, that is, persons who can reflect on the faith they have in Jesus Christ and reflect in such a way that they are deepened in their faith. Now, that I think should be the focus of this group of Theologically Trained Women.'

Mrs. Shanti R. Solomon, Executive Secretary of Asian Church Women's Conference conducted the Bible Study on the Woman who was considered a fallen woman according to her status in the society and how with God's grace she had an encounter with Jesus Christ. During the Bible Study Mrs. Solomon brought out the following points. This Samaritan Woman was not an ignorant and illiterate woman. She was well informed of her history and social customs. She was daring because she started talking with a strange man and also asked questions. She not only replied but was able to keep the conversation going. She was talking about practical things, He put His finger on the sin of which she was conscious. When she acknowledged her weak point and confessed, Jesus was ready to use her for His own Glory, for His own purpose. Mrs. Solomon felt that the Samaritan woman could be called a theologically trained woman since she knew about the Jewish faith, her own faith and about her ancestors. So in the whole story we can see a theologically trained woman having a consultation or dialogue with Jesus Christ. In her concluding remark she said, 'A theologically trained

woman she was yet not a saved woman. We can take degrees, the highest degree in theology but unless we have had an encounter with the Messiah, the Christ these degrees are useless and therefore I come back again to the same thing—theology is an experience, an expression of the experience that we have with the Living Christ.'

In the afternoon of 20th Mrs. K. K. George, Executive Secretary of the Theological Literature Committee, Kerala presented a well studied review of the book 'The Lady was a Bishop' by Joan Morris. The following are the extracts from Mrs. George's paper.

'This book is a product of comprehensive research work and thorough knowledge of Church and civic history of Europe and West Asia. Of course the work is done with a purpose—an ardent desire to do justice to women who have done their fair share in World's advancement and yet the story of it is suppressed by "purposeful malicious hiding of facts" in the name of religious convictions.'

'The author states at the very outset that history can be hidden in many ways such as lack of care in the recording of events or the loss of the records through calamities or the language barrier or the historian's bias for certain facts. It may be due to evasion of facts through prejudice or purposeful hiding of facts. The latter factors were active and evidences of activities of women are not easily available due to the conspiracy of silence of a man's world through the centuries. But if the truth has been covered up the stones will proclaim it.'

'Through this book the author wants to prove that women held positions of Episcopal Jurisdiction in the early Christian centuries true to the teachings of Christ. It was only after the Crusades, Renaissance and Napoleonic Wars, that woman lost their positions in the hierarchical service of the Church.'

'The book has ten chapters, in which the author makes a historical survey through Bible, early Church history and history of the religious communities in Europe and England. There she has searched old documents, Papal bulls, etc. and tried to bring out facts concerning women's participation over which the church historians are silent, and added several appendices, several important factors.'

'The author has added six subjects as appendices. They are vital topics for a study of women's participation in Church life. The author concludes that a change should come as an act of the Holy Spirit—man and woman in the Holy Spirit should co-operate in the service of God and worship Him.' Everyone was excited and wanted to read the book.

Mrs. Nalini Arles of South India Biblical Seminary, Bangarapet gave an inspiring talk on the Role of Theologically Trained Women. According to her, the role depends upon the calling whether it was, specific or



general. She felt that theologically trained women should not fight for acceptance but have the humility to serve and help the lay women to have deeper thinking. New ideas should be perpetuated and the views should be put in writing and strive towards building Christian homes. She concluded saying that people will listen to us by knowing our fruits.

Rev. P. Manoharan, Programme Secretary of Gurukul conducted the Morning Devotion on the 21st February. Mrs. Clara Clarke, The president of the All India Council of Christian women explained the history and working of the All-India Council of Christian women. It was essential for the theologically trained women's group to know about the AICCW because they had to work in co-operation with this Women's wing of NCCI.

The panel discussion on 'Problems of Woman Pastors and Associate Pastors' was one of the interesting items in the Programme. We were able to have all the three ordained women pastors of the Church of South India present for the discussion. Mrs. Katakshamma Paulraj served as the Moderator. Rev. Mrs. Nirmal Vasanth Kumar who was ordained before she got married and now has a son remarked 'It is difficult, but it is not impossible to be a Pastor'. She felt sorry that her family could not attend Sunday Service together since her husband was also a Pastor. Rev. Miss Eleanor Abraham said that she had problems only in the beginning as people found it difficult to accept her as a Pastor. Rev. Sister Betty Paul shared with the group how once a woman wept when she saw Betty serving the elements. Some people came to her Church just to see how she conducted the service. She was of the opinion that women had to prove their competence but should not push themselves.

Rev. Eva Zabolai Csekme's paper on 'Ordination of Women-rooted in the New Creation' was used. The participants were happy to get this valuable paper because they could continue to study this subject with the other women in their Churches. Mrs. Sarah Chanda presented a paper on 'The community of Women and Men in the Church' based on the 'Report of the Asian Consultation sponsored by World Council of Churches'. She had attended this consultation held at Bangalore and she was able to give further explanation of the paper she presented.

Mrs. Anna Abraham conducted the Morning Devotion on the 22nd. We were very fortunate to have the Founder and Promoter of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, Mrs. Shanti R. Solomon, to talk to us about the Fellowship of the Least Coin. She explained to the participants how she got the idea to start this Fellowship. The Fellowship of the Least Coin is an ecumenical movement of prayer for peace and reconciliation. Any Coin of the Currency which can be given without feeling the pinch becomes the least coin. Any member who wishes to become a member of the F.L.C. must promise

to spend some time in prayer whenever she has a strained relationship with another person or a group of persons or a nation. After spending some time in prayer for reconciliation and forgiveness, she should put aside the smallest coin of her currency as a tangible token of her prayer. These coins are collected once a year during a special service on the 4th Sunday in November and sent to Geneva. Different projects are supported with this offering. Mrs. Solomon also explained how the World Day of Prayer was started by a heart broken mother.

The Constitution for the Association of Theologically Trained Women in India was written by a small committee with Mrs. Saroj Shanthi Kumar as its Convener. Since she could not attend the Conference it was presented to the General Body by Mrs. V. Nallathambi of Gurukul and it was adopted.

The group spent some time discussing the future plans of their Association. It was suggested that theologically trained women should share their problems with the executive committee of the Association and find solutions. They could also start a Library where people who could not afford to go to college for further studies could get books. It was the dream of some that our women should write theology arising out of own situations.

It was resolved to place on record the deep appreciation of the Association of Theologically Trained Women in India to the Lutheran World Federation for giving the financial assistance to conduct this Conference. The Association also thanked the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute for playing the major role in bringing the theologically trained women for the Conference. The Association thanked the Asian Church Women's Conference who had the vision to start this conference in 1977 and for giving a generous grant to support the Association. The Conference thanked everyone who worked hard and had a share in the formation of this Association.

At the end of the Conference the new executive was elected. The following were elected as Office-Bearers:

Mrs. Vanitha Nallathambi	.. President
Mrs. Nalini Arles	.. Vice-President
Mrs. Katakshamma Paulraj	.. Secretary
Mrs. K. K. George	.. Treasurer

Mrs. Shanthi M. Solanki, Miss Basanthi and Mrs. Merian Miry were selected to the Executive to represent areas that were not covered by the officers. The newly elected Executive Committee members were installed by Mrs. Shanthi R. Solomon the 'Founder Mother' of the Association of Theologically Trained Women in India at a special installation Service.

Courtesy : *The Guardian*



# *Mutual Sharing and Solidarity: Theme of CICARWS Annual Meeting*

Washington, USA, (EPS)— 'While the goals of development are clear, the way to achieve them continues to be a challenging problem for churches and governments alike'. This comment came from Jean Fischer, the Director of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service (CICARWS), in his opening report to the annual meeting of the Commission.

Held at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Maryland, 24-28 April, the Commission meeting brought together some seventy people, commissioners, staff and guests from all continents.

Mr. Fischer's report concentrated on two main areas. Mutual aid, where, he said, 'in the world in which the churches are required to live and bear witness, with all its crises and tensions, there is no lack of opportunity to put mutual aid into practice' and solidarity, which, to practice it, he said, means 'to work for the unity of humankind...to be faithful to our ecumenical calling, not forgetting that our lives are set in a two-fold solidarity with all humankind: solidarity in sin and solidarity in grace'.

The main focus of this year's Commission meeting was on a newly published report which analyses the intricacies of the joint project list of CICARWS and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). The report recognizes that the growing and evolving ecumenical movement may call for new approaches and different means of carrying out the inter-church aid work accomplished in the past in the projects assisted through the annual list. The Commission commended the study for wide discussion and distribution both in the WCC, and in member churches and in the donor agencies who mainly support the CICARWS work.

In reviewing region by region and activity by activity the vast scope of work undertaken in the CICARWS the commissioners noted 'the precarious situation of Christian minorities in many Middle Eastern countries and also of the complexities of the Middle East political scene; agreed to co-sponsor, with the Christian Conference of Asia, a consultation, in November, in Bali on Asian reality and Christian response: the

search for a new community; and approved a 1980 Service Budget of SFr. 7.6 million, SFr. 141,000 up on 1979.

In the discussion concerning Africa it was revealed that the servicing of projects, other supporting services and the transfer of funds (US\$ 18.5 million requested in 1979) represents almost two-thirds of all CICARWS requests. On the US\$ 5 million appeal for Southern Africa, launched in December 1978 the Commission noted that the appeal 'affords an unusual opportunity to identify and highlight the needs and dynamics of that area for the whole world to behold'.

Meeting in the aftermath of the Ugandan fighting the Commission commended the initial appeal for US\$ 600,000 and agreed that WCC staff should meet directly with the Ugandan church and quickly disperse information on the needs of the Ugandans whether inside or outside their country and the proposed programme of the churches to meet their needs. It was also recommended that a meeting should be called to enable the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Planning Committee for Relief and Emergency Assistance for Uganda and representatives of the churches of Uganda to meet 'a wide spectrum' of Protestant organizations and groups interested in helping Ugandan refugees, engaging in Ugandan reconstruction, and achieving a degree of co-ordination and co-operation.

The CICARWS Refugee Service is bearing an increasing work-load as the world's number of refugees increase. The report noted the long-standing situation of the Palestinian refugees; the plight of the Indo-chinese refugees, especially the 'boat people'; and the Latin American refugee problem, especially highlighted by the conflict in Nicaragua.

The religious dimensions to the political conflicts which produce refugees in a number of African countries was also noted. The Commission suggests that a group comprising representatives from the WCC's sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (DFI), the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and the AACC should study this phenomenon and provide advice to the churches.

Questions concerning the defence of human rights dominated the discussions on Latin America. This concern is reflected in the 1979 project list where out of 84 programmes listed 58 deal directly or indirectly with human rights. In its recommendations the CICARWS Commission asked the WCC's Human Rights Resources Office for Latin America to convene a meeting in the region of those churches and communities committed to the defence and promotion of human rights, in order to share experiences and plan for the future. In addition, to see if meetings can be arranged bringing together Church and agency representatives from the industrialized nations, both from the East and the West, who are concerned for human rights in Latin America, in order to improve the coordination of their help to the churches and councils in Latin America.

In other business the Commission agreed to hold a consultation on food aid which would critically examine this type of aid and how it could be better used for development ends; discussed the role of the



churches in disaster preparedness and response; and encouraged staff to take initiatives to make known to the churches and co-operating councils and agencies the readiness of the WCC to facilitate new relationships in the sharing of human resources and to support opportunities for short-term exchange of persons.

The Commission also received reports from the Ecumenical Church Loan Fund (ECLOF) and the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society (EDCS) and encouraged ECLOF to pursue the experiment authorized in lending in higher risk areas.

The ongoing study on the Ecumenical Sharing of Resources was also presented to the CICARWS meeting. This study, which is due to be presented to the WCC's Central Committee meeting in August 1980, is looking at patterns of sharing between churches, based on the belief that there is a quality of sharing in which 'we neither ask, What do we have to give?' nor 'What do we gain?'—a sharing in which the very act itself is the end purpose.'

(Courtesy : *Ecumenical Press Service*)

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#### **The Joint Council . . .—(Contd. from page 4)**

revealed that the nature of the unity implied in the formation of the Joint Council and the next steps to be taken by the churches needed further clarification. Therefore the Executive Committee decided to have a two-day meeting in Nagpur about the end of August 1979.

The Committee also received good reports about the observance of the Festival of Unity on the 2nd Sunday in November by Churches throughout the country. Special united services and public meetings had also been held at the Headquarters of the three Churches, namely at Delhi, Madras and Thiruvalla. The prayer card had also been quite widely distributed. In Kerala the prayer had been made available in Malayalam also. It was decided that the Festival of Unity be made an annual celebration on the second Sunday of November every year. The prayer card is also to be made available in all the major languages in India.

Another happy news reported at the meeting was about the formation of Regional Joint Councils. The CNI-CSI-MTC Joint Council for the North East Region with Calcutta as centre was the first to be formed. Since then a Joint Council for the North West Region with Delhi as centre and a Joint Regional Council for Kerala have been formed. For the North West Regional Joint Council the Moderator of the CNI, Bishop Eric Nasir is the President and Mr. T. K. Mathew is the Convener. For the Kerala Regional Council Bishop Thomas Mar Athanasius and Bishop T. S. Joseph are Joint Presidents and Rev. M. C. Mani and Dr. V. P. Thomas are Joint Secretaries. The Committee decided to encourage the formation of Regional Joint Councils for other parts of India also with the metropolitan cities like Madras, Bombay and Bangalore as the centres.

The question of the Freedom of Religion Bill moved in Lok Sabha was also considered by the Committee.

It was decided that the Joint Council will co-operate with the National Christian Council in opposing the Bill. A suggestion was also made that a meeting should be arranged in Delhi for the supporters of the Bill including Shri O. P. Tyagi and those opposed to come together for a frank exchange of views in an atmosphere of friendly dialogue. It was the view of the Committee that Christian action resisting the Bill should be in co-operation with people of other faiths and secular organisations and that the objective behind opposing the Bill is not Christian self-interest but the well being of the nation. The Committee further affirmed that the present situation should be made an occasion for the rededication of the churches to the Mission of Jesus Christ believing that the mandate and power for the evangelistic calling of the Church is from Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and that our dependence is not on permission from Governments. It is also important that because of the commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Churches should have a proper sense of priorities in the national goals.

The committee suggested that every Regional Joint Council should take up some project for common action. At the National level it reiterated the earlier decision to take up a project for Christian mission and evangelisation in Rajasthan. A Delhi based team was appointed to visit Rajasthan and make a recommendation in consultation with the Bishop of the Delhi Diocese of the CNI. It is our hope that at least a preliminary report on the possibilities of a Joint Programme in Rajasthan will be available when the Executive Committee meets next. One thing that is becoming obvious again is that Mission and Unity belong together. Only as the churches act together in obedience to our Lord's call to be his witnesses in service, social action and evangelisation can they also receive power to manifest their oneness in Christ.

J. R. CHANDRAN

*Secretary*

CNI-CSI-MTC

Joint Council

Bangalore

14-5-1979

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## **Obituary**

Mr. G. Aravamuthan passed away on 15th June, 1979. He was 70 years of age. Mr. Aravamuthan was born to Hindu Orthodox Brahmin parents on December 9, 1909 in a village called Uppili Appan Kovil, near Kumbakonam in Tanjore Dist. He embraced Christ and was baptised on July 29, 1939. He was associated with the Methodist Missionary Society in Madras from 1938 and later on with the Church of South India. Besides being the Accountant in CSITA, he held various assignments in the Madras Diocese. He was an active parishioner and a lay preacher too. He retired from service in March, 1976. Even after his retirement, he was attending office in honorary capacity and giving valuable service to CSITA. He leaves behind his daughter Mrs. Valasarajan and four sons.



# *C.C.A. Policy on Sharing Personnel Within Asia*

## **I. Theological Background**

The Working Consultation of the then East Asian Christian Conference in 1964 in Bangkok stated to the EACC Assembly: 'Under God, there has come to the churches of Asia a new understanding of the missionary nature of the Church and a new conviction about their privilege and responsibility to play their part in the prosecution of the Church's mission—that the whole church is called in mission, to the whole world, means that when we are talking about the missionary enterprise, we are talking about the churches everywhere engaging together in mission. All must receive—all must send.'

## **II. Objectives**

After the Working Consultation gave the report, the Assembly decided to establish an Asian Missionary Support Fund (AMSF). The purpose is to facilitate and to enable the churches primarily within Asia to share personnel across national boundaries.

Asia is a vast continent with pluralistic societies separated geographically. There are also many cultural differences. During the colonial period most of the countries were oriented to the west—so they knew the west better than their neighbours in Asia. It was after World War II, when the countries became independent, and many churches became more indigenous, that they started to communicate with each other. Still there is great lack of communication and this has caused much ignorance of fellow Asians.

The meetings of the Programme Committee and the General Committee in February-March 1975 in Singapore realized this problem, and they saw the need to build up social-psychological infra-structures to bridge this gap. In that way, they thought, more impetus would be given to the churches to mutually share personnel.

For this purpose they added other objectives to the Fund, i.e. to promote mutual understanding, and a sense of solidarity and fellowship among the grass-roots of the churches who would then be more enthusiastic in helping each other because of this greater knowledge, fellowship and closer solidarity.

## **III. Practical Policy Guide**

In order to serve these objectives the Programme Committee and the General Committee adopted the following policy guide.

### **A. Priority groups of people to be received or sent**

1. Theological student ;
2. Churches' Communicators such as journalists and writers, etc. ;

3. Personnel to study projects in other countries ; (Note : In these three groups their terms should not exceed one year)
4. Technical personnel in the areas of evangelism, mobilization of local congregations, social justice programmes, migration of people, understanding our neighbours, and experiences in unity.

## **B. Recruitment**

### **1. Receiving**

- (a) A Church can request directly from other churches for personnel, and the requested church seeks the recruitment of such personnel.
- (b) A Church can also request CCA to look for personnel. In this case CCA will contact churches or individuals. When making contacts with individuals, CCA will obtain recommendations from their respective churches.

### **2. Sending**

- (a) A Church can directly request other churches to look for placements for their personnel.
- (b) A Church can also request CCA to search for a place for their personnel in other countries.

### **3. Criteria**

- (a) The receiving and the sending of personnel should cross national boundaries.
- (b) The personnel to be received and to be sent are to provide the opportunity for the churches to :—
  - (i) know each other better (exchanging knowledge and understanding between churches and countries)
  - (ii) create a sense of solidarity and fellowship
  - (iii) help each other :
    - evangelism
    - mobilization of local congregations
    - social justice programmes
    - migration of people
    - church unity experience

(Note: Theological students, church communicators and journalists belong to the categories (i) and (ii) above).



## C. Application for Funds

### 1. Eligibility to apply

- (a) a member church or NCC or other accredited agencies within the CCA area ;
- (b) other regional conferences/organizations of churches outside the Asian area ;
- (c) the Frontier Internship in Mission Programme of the Asia Committee of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) ;
- (d) the national ecumenical agencies outside Asia involved in a common strategy for action in Mission.

### 2. Requirements for application

#### (a) Personnel whose term exceeds one year

There should be an agreement between the receiving and the sending Church on :

1. the qualification of applicants ;
2. terms of appointment ;
3. housing provided by the receiving church ;
4. salary provided by the receiving Church equivalent to the stipend of a locally recruited person in the same position ;
5. readiness of the personnel to seek speaking engagements in the Church he/she visits as often as possible, to give information about the life of his church, to publish articles on the life of the Church he visits in his own church mass media. On return he/she should share as much information as possible to his/her own church ;
6. readiness of the receiving Church to give speaking opportunities for the visiting personnel to speak to Church groups informing them about the life of his/her Church, and to help raise funds for the Asian Missionary Support Fund ;
7. readiness of the sending Church to publish articles about the life of the church visited in their Church mass media ;
8. the sending church accepts some responsibility for costs relating to family circumstances, and to the rehabilitation etc. of the appointee on return from the appointment.

#### (b) Personnel Appointment not exceeding one year

There should be an agreement between the receiving and the sending church on :

1. qualification of the appointee ;
2. terms of appointment ;
3. housing by the receiving Church ;
4. salary paid by the sending Church ;
5. responsibility of the sending Church for costs relating to family circumstances ;
6. willingness of the sending church to rehabilitate the appointee when he/she returns, and to utilize his/her knowledge acquired during the service when he/she returns ;

7. readiness of the personnel to seek speaking engagements as often as possible informing the people about the life of his/her own Church and to publish articles on the life of the church he/she visits in his/her own church media. On return he/she should share information with his/her own church.
8. readiness of the receiving church to give speaking opportunities especially for those engaged in knowing each other, solidarity and fellowship (3b : i, ii) and to raise funds from the speaking opportunities for the Asian Missionary Support Fund ;
9. readiness of the sending Church to publish articles in its Church mass media about the life of the church he/she visited.

## IV. CCA Responsibilities

When the above conditions are fulfilled by the receiving and sending churches, CCA can provide the following financial assistance :

### A. Appointments for terms exceeding one year

1. International transport to and from appointee's home country of assignment.
2. Health and educational support for all members of appointee's family.
3. Additional salary, if the receiving and the sending churches think it necessary ; the amount of which to be decided by the two participating churches, and CCA.

### B. Appointments not exceeding one year

1. International transport for the appointee.
2. Health care for the appointee.
3. Additional financial aid for board if the receiving and sending churches think it necessary, the amount of which is decided by the two churches.
4. Transport cost for duties undertaken some distance from place of residence in host country if the receiving Church requests help.
5. Additional stipend especially for theological students, if the receiving and the sending churches request, and the amount will be decided by both churches, and CCA.

### Notes :

#### (a) Usage of term church

The terms receiving and sending churches imply all bodies mentioned in Paragraph III point C : a, b, c and d.

(b) The financial responsibility of CCA can cover what is called 'International based cost'. This is recommended by the meeting of CCA Mission Advisory Committee in 1974. In order to get as much output as possible from the financial input that CCA invests in the programme, the personnel that are received or sent should have additional duties such as speaking to Church groups, publishing articles and raising money from the local groups for the Asian Missionary Support Fund. CCA seeks from both within Asia and outside an annual amount of US \$ 50,000.

(c) The CCA would act as regional clearing house for the venture and CCA staff responsible for this programme would decide on allocations, keeping the Advisory Committee on Mission and Evangelism informed.

(d) These are seen as guidelines for the implementation of this programme.



# *The South Asia Church Aid Association*

SACAA was founded 99 years ago as the Indian Church Aid Association, a name with which some of you may be more familiar.

It was formed out of the Anglican Church in India by a group of laymen and some churchmen who were members of that Church, and not by missionaries from abroad.

Thus it became the overseas arm of the Anglican Church in India and the London Office of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. In times of difficulty with communication and channelling of funds between these countries, it acted as a meeting point and communications centre between the various international arms of the C.I.P.B.C.

As the Indian Church Aid Association was an arm of the C.I.P.B.C., the Diocesan Bishop became Vice-President of the Association with a right to sit on its Council, which they did whenever the opportunity presented itself.

The Council consists only of people with a knowledge of and service in India in any capacity and with a Christian background. The members come from business sections, civil services, military forces, and of course the Church. Both the Council and the Executive of the Association include Asian nationals.

The policies and functions of the Indian Church Aid Association have been guided purely by the Church in India. The traditional areas of its operation have been in bursaries, pensions, assistance to pastors and laymen in dioceses, and assistance to Bishops and other representatives of the Church when in England. It has also acted as spokesman of the C.I.P.B.C. in the U.K.

Historically, because of the Anglican parish system and the independence of dioceses, the links between the Indian Church Aid Association and the Bishops have been very close. When the C.S.I. was formed, the link with the Church in South India, except for the Diocese of Nandyal, was considerably weakened. The Association also administers certain charitable Trusts in the U.K., which finance certain specific purposes or institutions in India, and these links are maintained regardless of which Diocese they fall into.

The unity of the Church of North India, and of Pakistan brought about a change in the name and scope of the Indian Church Aid Association. Accordingly it was re-designated the South Asia Church

Aid Association—SACAA. This has provided the opportunity for closer relationship with the Church in South India—and for that matter—with the Mar Thoma Church. The Association's Council has now members of all denominations in its body.

This wider role has made the Association re-assess its role. It is the arm of the Churches in India, Ceylon, etc. and it is up to them to tell the Association what it should do. But a little guidance may help.

The Association has the advantage that it is not a missionary body traditionally working in certain areas, nor is it now related to any one Church denomination. Its role can therefore be more open.

But as a lay organisation, it is perhaps more qualified to fill in the gaps between the areas in which the missionary societies find difficult because of their charter or the nature of their constitution, either in the U.K. or in the sub-continent.

Traditionally as a communications centre between the churches of the sub-continent, the Association would be very happy to expend in that role. It would also like to examine the possibility, not only of orientation courses for suitable non-missionary ex-patriate personnel coming to India; relating to the churches in India; but also to complement in Britain any orientation courses for Indian nationals Proceeding to Britain.

The Association would also like to examine in what ways it could provide closer links between the Churches in India with business and professional sections in the U.K.

It feels that such links may lead to ways in assisting to meet requirements already expressed in the need for training qualified lay persons to serve in the dioceses.

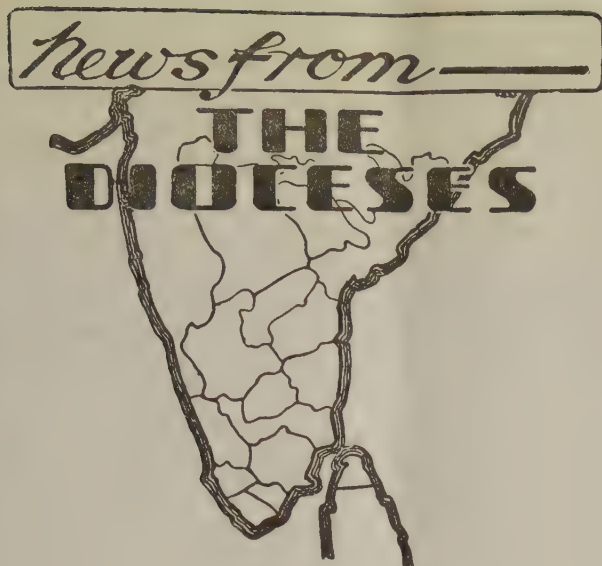
Finally I would like to say that the centenary celebrations of the Association will be held on Saturday June 14th or Sunday June 15th, 1980 at the Indian YMCA in London. Not only have you a right to attend them, but I sincerely hope that as many of you as are able will do so. The Moderator of the CNI has promised to be present, and we hope the leaders of many other Churches including the Archbishop of Canterbury will also grace us with their presence.

In the meanwhile, please remember that the South Asia Church Aid Association is your own Association and that we at the London end would welcome your ideas on how best we can serve you.

DERICK GARNIER  
*Chairman*  
*South Asian Church Aid*  
*Association*  
Edinburgh House  
2, East Street

Madras  
10 April, 1979





### DIOCESE OF VELLORE

The Diocese of Vellore (CSI) and the Roman Catholics organised a reception for Mr. George Fernandez when he visited Vellore on the 27th of May, 1979 to address Janata Party meeting. They presented a Welcome address and submitted a Memorandum against the Freedom of Religion Bill. Mr. Fernandez spoke for more than half an hour assuring them of his full support for the Christian cause.

After returning to Delhi, Mr. Fernandez wrote the following letter to the Rt. Rev. J. Sam Ponniah, Bishop in Vellore Diocese.

MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY  
INDIA  
NEW DELHI-110 011

JUNE 2, 1979.

Dear Bishop,

This is to thank you for the reception accorded to me and also to reiterate that the Janata Government will not do anything that will affect the rights of the minorities or in any way infringe upon the secular character of the Constitution.

Kindly convey my greetings and best wishes, to all the members of the Diocese.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) GEORGE FERNANDEZ

Rt. Rev. J. Sam Ponniah  
Bishop in Vellore (C.S.I.)  
Tamilnadu.

The following is the Memorandum.....

JULY 1979]

### MEMORANDUM

*Presented to Honorable Minister*

**Mr. George Fernandez**

*With the request to place before  
Honorable Prime Minister and his team of  
Ministers of the Government of India  
by the Christians of Vellore Diocesan area*

Honorable Sir,

We the undersigned, as duly authorised representatives of two lakhs of Christian community in Vellore Diocesan area, place this Memorandum before you for the relief requested for.

'The Freedom of Religion Bill, 1978' which has been moved by Sri. O. P. Tyagi, M. P. whom we have been given to understand is a Janata Party member is causing great anxiety to every Christian citizen, as the bill contains disastrous threats, to curtail the very Fundamental Rights guaranteed under the Constitution to the Minority.

The object of the bill reads that it is for providing prohibition of conversion from one Religion to another by use of Force or Inducement or Fraudulent means. There are already sufficient enactments and safeguards for punishing anyone who indulge in force or practice fraudulent means and mislead any person to do anything contrary to his wish. As such it is felt that the proposed bill is a superfluous one. The title of the Bill itself is in conflict indirectly with the object of the bill.

At this juncture, we wish to point out that the constant and traditional teaching and practice of Christian Religion itself is that no person should be converted or admitted in to the Christian Faith against his free will or without his full conviction in the faith he chooses to follow, or by any inducement or any fraudulent act.

The definitions which are sought to be given for the words conversion, force etc., in the proposed bill, makes Christians apprehend that the bill is not moved with bonafide intentions but is moved with ulterior purpose of giving a free hand to such of those religious fanatics who have been trying to suppress and oppress the Christian Minority Community and dubbing Christianity as a Western Religion and that Christianity should be rooted out from India, not knowing the fact that Christianity is one of the ancient Eastern Religions.

The wide meaning sought to be given to the terms 'Force', 'Fraud', 'Inducement' etc., are sure to affect the Fundamental Rights guaranteed to the Minority Religion to practice and propagate their Religion. Christ has given a Command to His disciples to propagate His teachings. 'Go ye therefore and teach all Nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matthews 28: 18). A Christian has to point out as per Christ's preachings that unless a person repents



for his evil deeds, God will not pardon him. Such a teaching as per the definition of the bill will be construed as a threat of Divine displeasure. This is one example to show the malafide in the bill. If the present bill of Sri. Tyagi is supported by the Government, it means the Christians are prohibited from following Christ's Command.

Similarly the other provisions in the bill are all repugnant to the very basic Fundamental Rights guaranteed to the minority Religion in the Indian Constitution to preach and practice one's own Religion, which has been safeguarded so far. Among other repercussions, we also like to bring to your kind attention that various benefits enjoyed by the Scheduled castes are already denied to Scheduled Caste Christians solely on the basis of Religion, which is a positive act of discrimination by the Government and this is an infringement of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

The Christians under our fold also are greatly agitated over the proposed bill. As such, as their representatives we are constrained to submit this Memorandum and focus your Government's attention to their feelings.

It is needless for us to remind the admitted facts that the Christians have been and are still rendering yeomen service to the backward class and scheduled tribes for their uplift in all the fields in every corner of India.

As representatives, we request the Government not only to oppose the passing of the bill of Sri. Tyagi, M.P., but also to refrain any move from any quarter from introducing any similar enactment by the Government, for which democratic act, the Christian citizens will be thankful. Also we sincerely hope that the Secular Democratic conduct of our Nation which has been acclaimed the universal appreciation, shall not now be allowed to be pulled down in the eye of the world, by the Government or others supporting this Freedom of Religion Bill of Sri. Tyagi or by the Government or others bringing in any such legislation in any other fashion.

RT. REV. J. SAM PONNIAH,  
*Bishop in Vellore (C.S.I.)*

RT. REV. R. ANTONY MUTHU,  
*Bishop of Vellore (R.C.)*

Vellore,  
27th May 1979.

For the Christian Community of  
Vellore Dioceses.

### KARNATAKA CENTRAL DIOCESE

May is generally regarded as the beginning of a new Diocesan year with clergy changing stations. There were not many transfers this year, but they were all effected smoothly.

Pastorates are also beginning a new period with elections taking place and which have to be completed before the end of June.

The inter-Diocesan Literature Board agreed to the reprinting of 'Special Services' in Kannada which

have not been available for some time. A reprint of the Multilingual hymn book is also in hand. This is especially useful for some of the Pastorates in new areas which have multilingual services.

One of the main concerns before the Inter-Diocesan A.F & P Board is the distribution of the mode of income from Unity Buildings when this becomes available in 1981.

Leadership training camps for senior students in hostels and boarding homes have been conducted by the CSI Council for Child Care. The Bishop presided over the inaugural function of central camp for the whole of C.S.I. We have a great potential of leadership among our young people and they need our encouragement to develop these qualities.

A meeting was organised by the Council for Child Care on the subject of residential Child Care. This matter is being hotly debated at the present time.

The Bishop attended a reception given to the delegates of the annual Methodist Conference which was held in Bangalore (MCSA). This was on 24th May—the day of John Wesley's conversion. This reminds us of one of the characteristic contributions of the C.S.I. participating in ecumenical services. On the 27th the Conference was shocked to hear about the drowning of Bishop Elia Peter's 19 year old son in the swimming pool on the campus where the Conference was in session. The Bishop represented the C.S.I. at a beautiful little service before the family left with the body for Hyderabad at midnight.

The Bangalore Civil Area Council organised a Conference for leaders at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield. This provided an opportunity to discuss some of the issues facing the Church at the present time. An attempt was made to deal with mission in the present context. This must always be under review. The Church must always be on the move to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. Indeed we should not be in the rear; we ought to be in the front.

The CSI Hospital Board met and approved its budget for the current year. This always raises the question of free treatment for the poor. This problem still seems to baffle everyone. Whenever I have listened to discussions on this matter I have felt that we first need to know who the 'poor' really are. Probably related to this is the question of public relations and support of the Institution by the Church. Some of the questions raised in the 1977 Diocesan Council are still under consideration.

We are normally required to send two candidates for ministerial training every year—one to replace those retiring and one to allow for growth. However, finding the response encouraging, the Recruitment Committee has chosen six candidates; they will be on probation for a year. Three are from a Kannada speaking area and three from a Tamil Speaking area. Two others are kept as reserves. They may be recruited next year.

### TIRUNELVELI DIOCESE

Every year, during the month of May, the diocese organizes an intensive evangelical campaign at a place outside the diocesan area. The evangelical work done at Arni, in North Arcot District in Tamil Nadu, this year between the 2nd and the 8th of May has met with



encouraging results. The following were distributed among those who are eager to listen to the gospel Gospel tracts—1 lakh copies; Gospel portions—2,500 copies; Gospel packets—1,000 items; New Testament—62 copies; the Holy Bible—3 copies. Bishop Daniel Abraham, along with his team of 9 clergy, 48 men and 2 women, stayed at Arni throughout the campaign, personally doing all his best to make the campaign effective. They visited the sick at C.M.C., Vellore and participated in a revival meeting held at the local Church at which Bishop Sam Ponniah gave a message. They are also interested in making the best of the follow-up work in which they are involved at the movement.

R. JOSEPH.

## PASTOR'S CONFERENCES IN GUJARAT

Two Pastor's Conferences were organised by Mr. M. M. Das, the Promotional Secretary of EFI, at *Bharuch* and at *Mahemdabad*, February 25-28 and March 1-4, 1979 respectively. The Rt. Rev. Bishop J. G. Chrispal of Gujarat Diocese opened the *Bharuch* Conference and Revd. R. M. Rathod, Evangelism and Stewardship Secretary of M.C.S.A. opened the *Mahemdabad* Conference.

Bishop Chrispal exhorted the Pastors to become good shepherds, concerned visitors, caring for their members and feeding them with spiritual food, so that members may not leave their churches and go to groups and assemblies recently entered in Gujarat.

Revd. Rathod challenged the Pastors to pray and work for the New Testament type of Church, self-supporting and self-propagating.

The EFI Executive Secretary Mr. John D. Richards explained the objectives and functions of the Evangelical Fellowship of India and its various departments. He emphasised the sacred call of Christian Ministry. When he gave up a lucrative job in the Indian Air Lines in order to take up the present responsibility his friends called him crazy. To them he replied: 'my salary may be small but my job is big. I am serving the King of Kings.'

Mr. Sat Kirti Rao, the Secretary for Revival and evangelism presided over both the Conferences. His comments and observations were enlivening and useful. From the very beginning he made the Pastors Work and he made them join in close prayer fellowship. He gave a chorus for the Conferences: If I believe and you believe and we together strive, the Holy Spirit will come down and Gujarat (Bharat) will revive. Overnight one Pastor translated it into Gujarati. He called him a poet in the making.

The Revd. Thevdon Williams gave a heart searching and thought provoking message based on the scripture. Being a former Pastor for a decade or so of M.C.S.A. he knew the problems of both the Pastor and his parish. He emphasised how a Pastor is expected to be an evangelist, a teacher, a Counsellor, an administrator, a shepherd equipping his laity to advance the growth of the Church when he is not there. Being the Secretary of the Missions he challenged the Pastors to become Missionary minded as we are only 2% of the population of India. And the second coming of our

Lord is very near. He opened our eyes to the fact that in Gujarat only .4% were Christians, it is an open field for harvest. His missionaries of the Prayer Band, working in South Gujarat had learnt Gujarati and the village dialect in a couple of years and they surprised us when they sang beautiful Gujarati songs in melodious tunes. Their Mother tongues were either Tamil, Telugu or Malayalam. Those dedicated evangelists of the Prayer Band kept up the missionary zeal and enthusiasm. We thanked God that young men are coming out to become missionaries in our own land.

Throughout the Conferences it was emphasised that EFI was not a new Church, but an agent of the churches to win souls and leave the Converts in the case of well established churches. God, in His own time, has been thus blessing the churches in India through the inspiring activity of the EFI these three decades.

The Rev. Francis Sunder Raj made a wonderful team with the Rev. Thevdon Williams. F. S. Raj is the Secretary for Christian education. He was a Pastor of MCSA for a number of years. He led the Pastors in Bible study and emphasised Christian education in the home and in the Church—at Sunday School and in the youth organization. His insight into scriptures is wonderful. The CEEFEC course is very popular. Mr. M. M. Das gave years in getting the course translated into Gujarati. The glaring need of adult Bible study was emphasised. Teaching on family life was a must, he said. He presented a book on family life in English.

Lt. Cornoln Mathews, the Secretary for Relief, EFICONE, appeared on outstanding personality. He read a paper and on the very first day of the meeting Mr. and Mrs. Devdatt Christian of the *Bharuch* spiritual life centre translate the paper into Gujarati. A few Pastors who knew English better co-operated and worked with them into midnight. It was cyclostyled and copies put into the hands of Pastors at *Mahemdabad*. Copies of it may have reached the *Bharuch* Pastors by mail, it is hoped..

The Church is not concerned with Men's spiritual needs only but is equally concerned with his social and economic needs also. When announced a few Pastors gave written applications for the economic needs of Church parishes. He said, if the local Christians would do what they could he would work through EFICONE to give them financial assistance according to the need in hand. For people caught in Cyclone and floods ETICORE has done so much in South India.

The scripture Gift Mission Secretary presented the literature available for Christians for their nurture and for outreach to non-Christians. He emphasised that every home or Church should have its library. Churches ought to have a budget for evangelical literature.

Miss Edgar, the Secretary for Communication and Women is an experienced lady Missionary. She even snatched time, at tea and meal hours, to present the cause. She has great vision and plans. She appealed to the Patrons for their co-operation.

Rev. R. B. Desai of Ahmedabad, a former principal of G.U.S.T., a very experienced interpreter, helped to interpret all the four days at *Bharuch*. Revd. Navin Parmer, Revd. Paul Chauhan, Revd. B. B. Christian and

(Continued on page 17)



# Book Review

## THE MEANING OF THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE EMERGENCY

This book is a collection of a number of papers by eminent writers which deal not only with the basic factors which led to the authoritarian rule of emergency in India in 1975, but also bring to light the underlying economic, social and political forces which emphasises in the need for people's continued commitment for the transformation of the society. The book is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the analysis and interpretations of emergency, the second part with Christian response and third part with group reports.

First part of the book includes five papers which give an analysis of emergency. It describes how after the declaration of emergency union government, parliament, Supreme Court and State governments succumbed to the developing situations and Co-operated with caucus to legitimise Mrs. Gandhi's coup against the Indian people. And how vast majority of the legal profession, Trade Unions like AITUC, INTUC, Religions minorities in India have not played their part will in promoting the cause of democracy.

Mr. George Mathews paper attempts briefly to focus attention on certain political trends since Janata party assumed office. It says that the most creditable achievement of Janata government is that it has succeeded in removing the fear of the people and restoring the fundamental freedom. But in Reconstruction of Socio Economic politics, Hindu communal fanaticisms etc. Janata government has come in for severe criticism. Mr. Ramesh Raj Ray describes in his paper how sixth Lok Sabha election have heralded a new era in Indian politics and how one party dominance came to an end. He points out that authoritarian tendency has been building up since 1969 and came in to the open in 1975 with imposition of emergency and how 77 election ended the authoritarian rule. In the International field also, authors like Dr. Gunnar Myrdal argued that an authoritarian rule may be better for country like India. By early 1976, emergency India had become generally respectable in the eyes of most countries, outside. World Bank played important role during emergency and USSR appreciated India and Iranian Prime Minister who visited India during emergency felt as if he was in his own country. So the election results came as a surprise to most sections outside the country.

Second part of the book deals with the Christian Response during and after emergency. Saral K. Chatterji's paper gives a clean picture about the Indian churches and how they behaved during emergency. And the paper points out that how Indian churches supported emergency rule even though churches outside the country made representation to Indian Prime Minister to release all political prisoners. Another paper points out how Indian churches have not recognised and analysed properly the political issues of the country

and incidents like Allahabad high court judgement, JP's movement and subsequent horror of emergency. Mr. Kappen describes that only the realisation of structural changes at the local level will give opportunities to the common man to train himself in decision-making and self-management.

Part three of the book deals with group reports. It considers that human rights are a gift endowed by God to all people and the churches should act with courage and responsibility to safeguard the human rights. All Christians should oppose all kinds of domination and exploitation. And further the report explains how the Christian Community should fight for justice in the society.

S. JEEVANANDAM.

## THE PATTERN OF PRAYER

By W. E. Sangster, M. A., ph.d., and Leslie Davison, B. D. (Epworth Press, London pp 128)

It is very rarely that any book, however good it may be, is read once over again. This applies to sacred as well as secular literature. Critics bother much less to review and re-assess a spiritual and literary classic of a by-gone decade.

THE PATTERN OF PRAYER is one such classic on the subject of prayer, bequeathed to us by that great Methodist missionary W.E. Sangster and his dedicated colleague Leslie Davison. Here, they freely share with the reader, the rich experience of their inner prayer-life. Dr. Sangster literally lived in the realm of prayer. It was his firm conviction that every step in the life of a man of prayer is ordered by the Lord and that such a man neither trips nor falters. His very life was a powerful witness to this conviction. He has left behind a blazing trail that shines brighter and brighter every day; the prayer cell movement gathers momentum and power all over the world. Leslie Davison has added to the value of the book by contributing experiences and thoughts from his own Prayer life.

The book is not a treatise on prayer. It is just an earnest endeavour to drive home to us the vital need of prayer in our lives. The authors have drawn liberally on the experiences of Bible characters like Abraham, Moses and King David, and of the blessed heroes of the Church like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa, Charles Wesley etc.

The chapters are appropriately arranged and well-designed to help persons in various praying levels-down from the tyro up to those in the higher reaches. Chapter 7 is a brilliant and incisive exposition of the Lord's prayer initiating us into hitherto un-explored



vistas and domains of our relationship with our fellow-men and our Master. The Chapter on 'Prayer and Sickness' dwells on the amazing power of prayer in healing our body, mind and soul.

Every page throbs with life. We hear the authors speaking to our inmost hearts and spurring us on to a deeper and richer life. It is a veritable treasure to ministers and laymen alike; particularly to the latter who stand much in need of counsel and guidance in this sphere.

D. SAMUEL JEYASINGH

News from the Diocese . . .—(Continued from page 15)

Mr. Mr. Franklin interpreted at Mahemdabad. In the absence of Mr. M. M. Das, Mr. Franklin organised the working of the Mahemdabad Conference. It was hard work but he did it so cheerfully and patiently.

Mr. Devdatt and Mrs. Abigail Christian, the directors of Bharuch centre with their hard working and devoted staff fed the Pastors well and kept up the spiritual atmosphere of the conference. Revd. Paul Heggans and Mr. and Mrs. Morris (juniors) and Mr. David with their staff looked so well towards the physical needs of the Pastors lodging and boarding, and so kept the conference for its success.

The Pastors gave their mite both at Bharuch and at Mahemdabad to help the Christians in Arunachal Pradesh and prayed for them in their trials. Mr. M. M. Das moved a special appeal for this.

Both at Bharuch and at Mahemdabad the Pastors snatched time to honour the EFI servants of Christ with Commendation and garlands.

At the closing meeting we sat in a circle. Mr. Sat Kirti Rao led at the testimony meeting. There was solemn quiet and Pastors broke in spontaneous expressions of praise and thanked for what the conference had meant for them individually and would mean to those they would serve. With the Lord's prayer and benediction the conference closed.

P. K. DAS,  
Baroda-2.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

'CHRISTIAN YOGA DISCIPLINES', A COURSE—July 23 to Aug. 4, 1979. For better health and healing, and for deeper life in Christ, and for getting rid of some of the problems of health, such as asthma, colds, constipation, diabetes, neurasthenia, etc. The C.S.I. Synod's Deeper Inner Life Ministry's Centre will conduct a course at 4, Church Road, Vepery, Madras-600 007, from July 23 to August 4, 1979. Classes will be held in the mornings 7 to 8.30. No classes on Sundays. Please apply to reach the address below, by 20-7-'79. On the first day each applicant will pay a minimum sum of Rs. 20 as contribution towards the ministry. Places are limited. Apply early to: Bishop C. S. Sundaresan, 4 Church Road, Vepery, MADRAS-600 007.

# Notices

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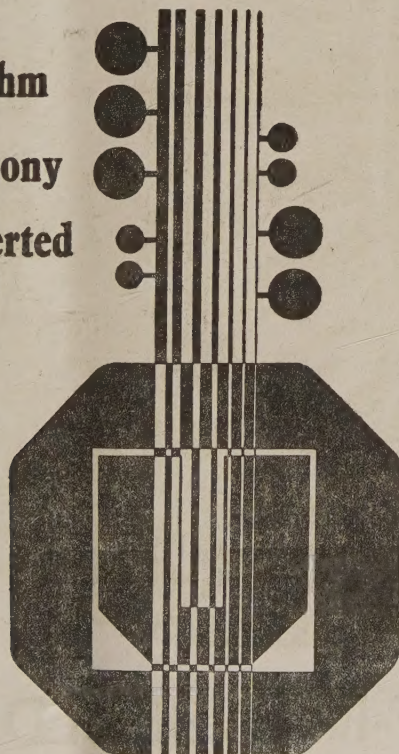
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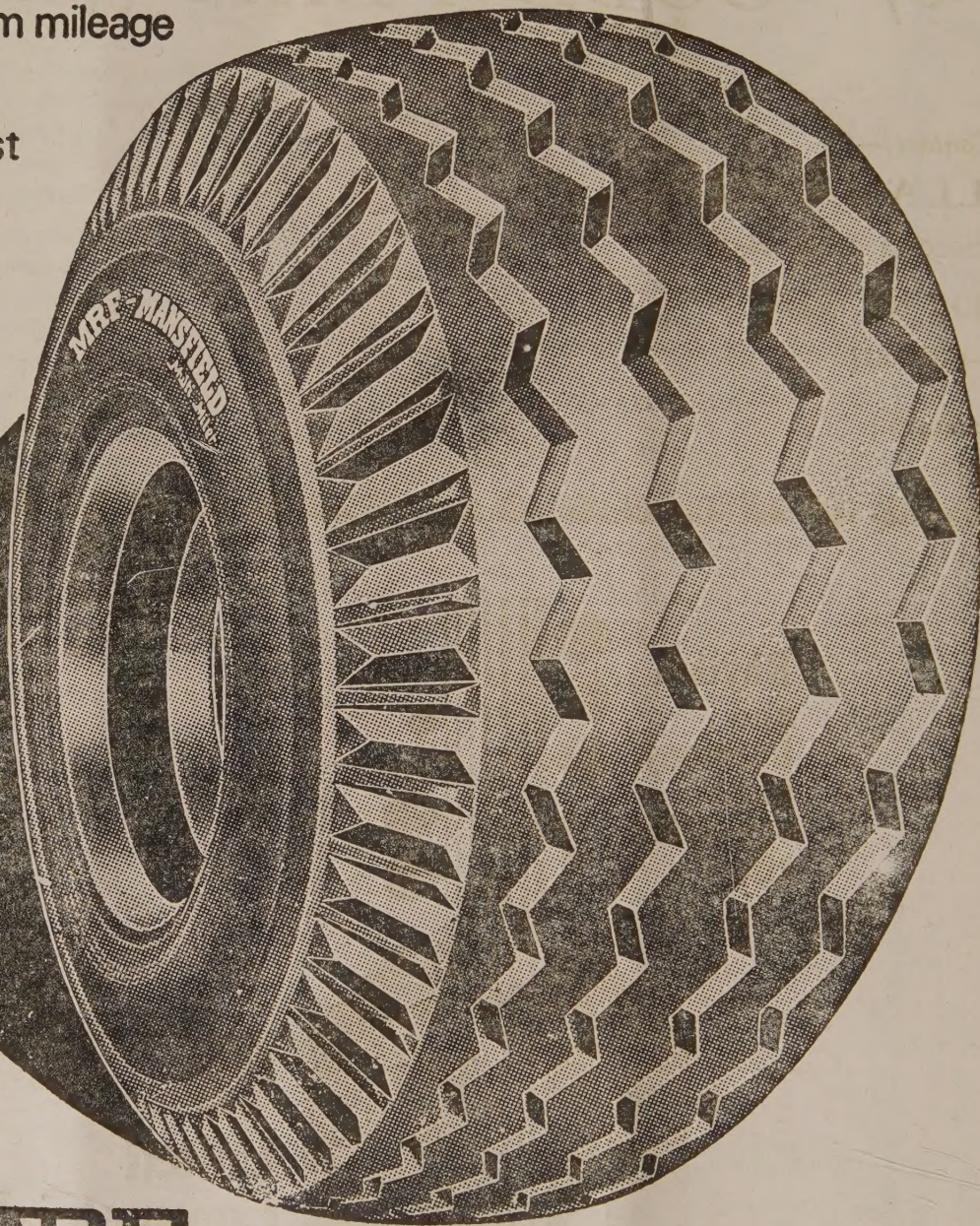
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